

REMARKS

Claims 16 and 22 have been amended. Claim 21 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new claims have been added. Accordingly, claims 16-20 and 22-27 are currently pending in the application.

Priority

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for priority and safe receipt of the priority document.

35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

Claims 16-20 and 24-25 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Chu et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,493,710). Claim 21 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chu et al in view of Nagai et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,223,991). Claims 22 and 26-27 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chu et al in view of Nagai et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,223,991) as applied to claim 21 and further in view of Roth (U.S. Patent No. 5,907,839). Finally, claim 23 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chu et al in view of Tamura (U.S. Patent No. 5,640,556). These rejections are traversed as follows.

The present invention is directed to an attribute data correction method in a distribution system having a plurality of elements, each including a computation device and a storage device. The method includes a step of storing in a storage device of one element, attribute data indicating an attribute of the element. The method also includes a step of receiving attribute data of this one element from at least another one of the plurality of elements. The method also includes a step of determining, by the computation device in this one element, a content of the attribute data to be held by the one element based on the content of the attribute data received from the other element. Furthermore, the method includes the step of correcting the content of the attribute data stored in the storage device to be coincident with the determined content of the attribute data. Finally, the determined content of the attribute data is notified to the other elements from this one element.

Chu et al disclose a metadata synchronizer system having Tool-A, Tool-B, Tool-C and a metadata synchronizer 118. The metadata synchronizer 118 monitors the objects processed by other Tools to determine whether metadata for any of the objects has changed. The metadata synchronizer system is like a centralized system and is unlike the present invention in the following points.

First of all, it is not clear from Chu et al whether Tool-A, Tool-B and Tool-C have a computation device and a storage device. From reading the disclosure of Chu et al, it appears that they do not have a computation device and a storage device. Instead, the metadata about objects can be stored in a data storage device 106 (see column 3, lines 58-60).

With respect to Applicants' claimed receiving step, one element receives attribute data from another element of the distributed system. However, according to Chu et al, Tool-A, Tool-B and Tool-C receive information from an information catalog 302, but not from another Tool.

With respect to Applicants' claimed determining step, determining is done by computation device in each element according to the attribute data received from another element. However, Chu et al disclose that the determination is done by and in the metadata synchronizer 118 but not in each Tool. Chu et al disclose that the metadata synchronizer monitors objects and determines whether to modify the metadata for each object in the information catalog (see column 3, lines 41-63).

With respect to Applicants' claimed notifying step, the determined content of the attribute data is notified from one element to another element. However, Chu et al disclose that the determined data, for instance updated metadata, is

transferred from the metadata synchronizer 118 to each Tool, but not from one Tool to another Tool.

The deficiencies in Chu et al are not overcome by resort to Nagai et al. Nagai et al disclose that a majority circuit 30 determines an output ID data according to a majority rule. Even if this is the case, Nagai et al does not have any structure corresponding to an element having a computation device and a storage device as recited in claim 1. In addition, ID detector 20 of Nagai et al does not perform the steps of receiving, determining and notifying as presently claimed. As such, the attempted combination of references fails to raise a *prima facie* case of unpatentability.

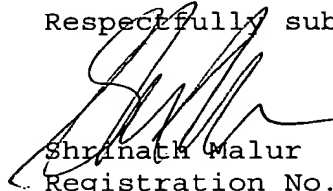
Finally, Roth merely discloses that a weighted-majority algorithm depends upon a total number of mistakes. Although Roth does not cure the deficiencies of Chu et al and Nagai et al, it is further pointed out that Roth does not disclose the step of defining a significant level for each element at a time of updating as in the presently claimed invention. Therefore, this attempted combination of references also fails to raise a *prime facie* case of unpatentability.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is in

condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Shrinath Malur
Registration No. 34,663
Attorney for Applicant(s)

MATTINGLY, STANGER & MALUR
1800 Diagonal Rd., Suite 370
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-1120
Date: August 23, 2004